Concordia
UNIVERSITY

School of Community and Public Affairs

What is Community and Public Affairs?

The study of community and public affairs is a relatively new and rapidly expanding field of activity and inquiry. In broad terms it involves the analysis of the interrelationship between individuals and organizations at the community, government and private/corporate levels. The aim of the School of Community and Public Affairs is to expose students not only to how these various groups work, but also to how the individual practitioner of community and public affairs can function within or between organizational levels. Our focus, therefore, is on interpretation, prescription and action.

One important aspect of this discipline is the need to understand the complexity of government. The change in the traditional pattern of private sector-government relations is prompting a growing number of organizations, whether political, social or corporate, to become active in influencing policy directions. Industrial, manufacturing, resource and financial institutions are expanding their public affairs divisions as community organizations and local pressure groups become involved in the question of how to deal with governments and access the policy-making process. All of these elements are within the scope of our programme.

Finally, community and public affairs imply a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to contemporary issues. There is not one lesson or technique that qualifies an individual to practice community and public affairs. Rather, a variety of tasks and abilities, experience and sensitivities, combined with a solid sense of the social, economic, cultural and political dimensions of society, provide a basis for the development of expertise and ability in this discipline.

School Personnel

The academic personnel of the School of Community and Public Affairs includes a Principal, a Vice-Principal and Fellows. The Fellows are drawn from various disciplines such as Communications, Economics, History, Political Science, Sociology, Urban Studies and Women's Studies. Most Fellows are members of the Concordia faculty, although some may be appointed from other universities and organizations. The academic staff is responsible for setting the curriculum, teaching courses offered by the School, and advising students. The School also employs a full-time secretary and an internship co-ordinator.

The Programme

The SCPA programme blends various disciplines and academic approaches. The basic core curriculum comprises courses in economics, history, political science and sociology. The aim is to provide students with a broad understanding of how their communities (local, provincial, federal and international) are studied from various perspectives. Sections of these required courses are offered by Fellows of the SCPA in either French or English.

Seminars are offered in all years of the SCPA programme. They provide a forum for discussing alternative approaches to contemporary problems. Basic skills, including quantitative techniques and research methods are offered, and major themes in community and public affairs are discussed. Students are provided with a broad theoretical framework in their first year of study upon which to build more practical critical perspectives in their second and third year seminars.

An internship offers practical experience. After completing sixty credits, students are expected to work on an internship basis in a job that will expose them to various dimensions of the practice of community and public affairs. Such employment may be found in government, the private sector, the labour movement or in a community organization. The outline and evaluation of the internship will be agreed upon by the student, the internship co-ordinator and the employer: the evaluation will appear on the student's transcript.

In addition to completing the SCPA core curriculum, all students must follow a disciplinary B.A. programme by registering in a departmental Major, Specialization or Honours programme. This departmental part of the programme provides an area of academic focus for every member of the School, and is the complement that allows graduates of the SCPA to pursue post-graduate work in one of a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas.

As an additional requirement, every member of the SCPA is expected to participate fully in the operation of the School. The programme as a whole is very task-oriented and aims at preparing students for activity and involvement in community and public affairs as well as for graduate studies. Participation in our community is considered to be an essential element of the educational process. Assuming some responsibility in student government, organizing and attending seminars and public lectures and receiving guests, are considered integral to our curriculum.

For further information:
School of Community and Public Affairs

Check appropriate boxes

- ☐ I wish to apply for entry to the school
- ☐ I have already applied for admission to the University
- ☐ I have checked Box "D" on the University application form
- ☐ I am already a student at Concordia University (Student No. _____)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Previous Educational Institution _____

Please send this card to:

Office of the Principal
School of Community and Public Affairs
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1M8

Programme Components

Core Programme (36 credits)
All students must take the following:

ECON 201	Introduction to Microeconomics (3 credits)
ECON 203	Introduction to Macroeconomics (3 credits)
HIST 205	History of Canada, Post-Confederation (3 credits)
POLI 250	Canadian Government and Politics (6 credits)
SOCI 203	Introduction to Society (3 credits)
SCPA 300	Integrative Seminar (6 credits)
SCPA 401	Modular Seminar (3 credits)
SCPA 411	Internship (3 credits)
SCPA 412	Research Seminar (3 credits)

3 credits chosen from SCPA 498, COMS 461, MATH 207 (or equivalent), SOCI 353, MANA 266.

Students are required to maintain an overall average of 70%. In addition, all members of the School of Community and Public Affairs are expected to participate fully in the operation of the School.

Any substitution/modification in the programme must have the approval of the Principal.

The Internship

The internship is an important training ground. Because it demands active and imaginative responses, the internship experience is an opportunity to test theory and formulate new approaches. Finally, this period of employment is a time when our students can familiarize members of the larger community with our programme, its aims and its achievements. Support for this aspect of our programme is consistently positive. Government, business and community leaders have been helpful in advising and placing our students. The experience is one which adds a very important practical dimension to our programme. Success in an internship enhances a student's potential, whatever career path is chosen.

Entrance Requirements and Admission Procedures

Students admitted to the University who wish to enter the School of Community and Public Affairs must have achieved a "B" average at their previous educational level. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate who fails to meet this requirement may be admitted on the basis of personal evaluation.

All applicants are asked to complete a personal résumé and meet with members of the School for an interview. The discussion touches upon a number of areas ranging from the candidate's interests and experience through his/her ideas about community and public affairs; the interview is conducted in English and French.

For information call: (514) 848-2575

The Student Body

The student body is drawn primarily from the Faculty of Arts and Science, although students from other Faculties such as Commerce and Administration are admitted. Students are therefore exposed to various disciplines through interaction with their peers. Students who have chosen the School usually cite the following as important factors:

- the unique curriculum
- the bilingual environment
- the small classes
- the sense of community and involvement
- the internship

What do graduates of the School of Community and Public Affairs do?

While some students will enter the work force upon completion of their undergraduate programme, we strongly urge members of our School to consider pursuing post-graduate work. The combination of a disciplinary B.A. with the SCPA programme provides our graduates with a variety of possibilities in this area. Not only are programmes in the humanities and social sciences possible alternatives, professionally-oriented courses of study, including Public or Business Administration and Law, are also areas where graduates of the SCPA are qualified candidates.

Job opportunities for SCPA graduates are good. Public agencies and leaders in government and business have expressed the need for generalists trained in public affairs: the demand for individuals with such a background is strong. Projections of future demand appear equally promising, particularly for those who are able to express themselves in both French and English.

Depending upon the choice of disciplinary specialization, our graduates may expect to pursue such diverse occupations as:

- public affairs specialists in corporations
- civil servants at local, provincial, national or international levels
- public policy analysts and advisors to community and other organizations
- community group leaders and political organizations
- journalists, broadcasters, editors, TV and radio producers
- urban planners, educators

Why the School of Community and Public Affairs?

Concordia's SCPA offers its members a challenging, comprehensive and creative educational experience. The academic programme is rigorous: students are expected to be involved in every aspect of the learning process and to maintain their standing. In addition, successful participation in the practical elements of the curriculum is equally important. Every one of our graduates will have an unique work experience.

One of our major aims is to provide an environment that is conducive to discussing and learning about community and public affairs. Our Mackay Street location is an ideal setting. As a home for our members, it is the site of classes, social events, public lectures and meetings. A reading room provides access to materials for SCPA courses. Resident and non-resident Fellows, Student Association offices and computer facilities are also housed in the building.